

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

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R 111610Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5501

USMISSING USUN NY

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 8085

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, IN, CAN, US

SUBJ: INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE, DIEGO GARCIA

REF: NEW DELHI 7329, NEW DELHI 8330

SUMMARY: INDIAN OFFICIALS HERE APPEAR INCREASINGLY CYNICAL ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE ZONE OF PEACE PROPOSAL AND THERE ARE REPORTS OF DIFFERENCES IN THE INDIAN AND SRI LANKA APPROACH TO THIS ISSUE. COMMUNIST PAPERS PERSIST IN PORTRAYING DIEGO GARCIA AS A THREAT BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO BROAD CAMPAIGN AGAINST THIS FACILITY. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE BEING BROUGHT UP TO DATE ON ACTIVITIES AND PROSPECTS OF THE UN AD HOC COMMITTEE CONCERNED WITH THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO A REPORT IN THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES", INDIA AND SRI LANKA HAVE DRIFTED APART ON HOW TO GO ABOUT MAKING THE INDIAN OCEAN  
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A ZONE OF PEACE; DIFFERENCES SURFACED WHEN SRI LANKA'S FOREIGN AND

DEFENSE SECRETARY DISCUSSED THE ISSUE HERE IN EARLY JUNE; INDIA REGARDED AS EXAGGERATED SRI LANKA'S CONCERNS OVER THE INCREASING SOVIET INTEREST IN THE AREA.

2. AN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS CONFIRMED THIS REPORT IN PART. HE SAID COLOMBO HAD ORIGINALLY PRESSED THE PEACE ZONE PROPOSAL AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF INSURGENCY AT HOME; MRS BANDARANAIKE HAD A GENERAL INTEREST IN AN INITIATIVE, BUT THE CEYLONESE FELT AS WELL

THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IN TERMS OF INTERNAL PROBLEMS TO KEEP PRESSURE ON NON-INDIAN OCEAN POWERS TO STAY OUT THE AREA. INDIA AGREED WITH THIS CONCEPT WHICH WAS CONSISTENT WITH IDEAS IT HAD ALREADY ADVOCATED. RECENTLY HOWEVER THE CEYLONESE HAVE BEEN CONCENTRATING MORE ON OBLIGATIONS THAT WOULD BEAR ON THE INDIAN OCEAN COUNTRIES THEMSELVES. INDIA OPPOSED SOME OF THESE IDEAS AND PARTICULARLY THE CONCEPT OF A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE THAT WOULD INCLUDE INDIA BUT NOT CHINA. THE CEYLONESE WERE VAGUE ON DEFINITIONS AND SEEMED TO HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT THE EFFECT OF SOME OF THEIR PROPOSALS WOULD BE. IN ANY EVENT, THE INDIANS WERE NOT MUCH INTERESTED. THEY DOUBTED THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN PROPOSALS WOULD NEVER AMOUNT TO MUCH BESIDES PIOUS UN RESOLUTIONS THAT MIGHT HAVE SOME VALUE AS AGAINST OUTSIDE POWERS.

3. WE HAVE HEARD FROM THE CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION HERE THAT COMMENTS BY MRS. GANDHI TO PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU ON NON-ALIGNMENT HAVE PROMPTED QUESTIONS FROM OTTAWA ON WHAT TO SAY IF INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE QUESTION WERE RAISED AT THE COMMONWALTH PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING IN AUGUST.

4. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA PRESS HAS PERSISTED IN PORTAYING DIEGO GARCIA AS A THREAT TO INDIAN OCEAN SECURITY. CONGRESS PARTY PRESIDENT SHARMA WAS QUOTED IN "PATRIOT" AS HAVING A PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE WORLD CONGRESS OF PEACE FORCES IN MOSCOW THAT US EFFORTS TO ENLARGE ITS NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN DESPITE UN RESOLUTIONS WERE SERIOUS AND THE CREATION OF A US NAVAL BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA WAS "AN ACT OF PROVOCATION AND A THREAT" TO PEACEFUL RELATIONS OF THE LITTORAL STATES. THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, HAS NOT COMMENTED ON DIEGO GARCIA SINCE ITS INITIAL BACKGROUNDER ON REPORTS OF DIEGO GARCIA'S COMMISSIONING REFTELS). NOR HAS THE INDIAN PRESS GENERALLY PURSUED THIS SUBJECT.

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5. A RECENT REPORT OF THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF DEFENSE STUDIES AND ANALYSIS REFLECTS CONCERN NOT ONLY OVER THE US COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK "SEEPING AROUND" FROM THE PACIFIC TO THE INDIAN OCEAN, BUT ALSO WITH THE STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE USSR, US, FRANCE AND CHINA IN THE AREA.

6. COMMENT: INDIAN OFFICIALS DO NOT SEEM TO BE AWARE OF THE

AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE UN AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE. THEY EXPECT THAT IT WILL DEAL WITH DEFINITION OF THE AREA AND STATES THAT MIGHT BE INCLUDED. WE WOULD APPRECIATE, FOR OUR OWN GUIDANCE AND NOT FOR TRANSMITTAL TO THE GOI, BEING BROUGHT UP TO DATE ON WHAT THE AD HOC COMMITTEE HAS DONE AND WHAT IT IS LIKELY TO DO.  
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